



Do you know what the expectation is when it comes to safety knives and cutting tools? Do you know which are permitted and which are prohibited on the shop floor? The utility knife is one of the most dangerous tools in the workplace and can cause serious damage in an instant. Workers use utility knives to puncture shrink wrap, open packages, cut strapping and so much more.

This week we will discuss knife safety and the different levels of approved cutting devices. We will also discuss reasons why knife accidents occur and what you can do to follow safe steps when using a knife, at home and at work.

Monday – Safety Knife Levels Chart

Knife blades are not all made alike. The safest knives to use are level 1 knives which are bladeless safety cutters. If that's not possible then a level 2 knife is permitted, which are concealed blade safety cutters. If you can't get the job done with a level 1 or 2 knife, you may look to a level 3 knife, which is a full automatic retractable smart knife. Please note level 4 knives, which are semi-automatic retractable knives, are considered unsafe and should be used only if level 1-3 knives cannot be used. Level 5 knives are manually retractable and fixed blade knives that should never be used.

The chart is titled "SAFETY KNIFE LEVELS CHART" and features a color gradient bar at the top ranging from green (SAFEST) to red (UNSAFE). It is organized into five columns, each representing a safety level:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Bladeless Safety Cutters	Concealed Blade Safety Cutters	Fully Automatic Retractable Smart Knives	Semi Automatic Retractable Knives	Manually Retractable & Fixed Blade Knives
545	121001	124001	Secunorm 175	12552
222	109137	101806	9929	46102
50 300	Secumax 350	122001	110100	46144
9	Zepher 105	116006	120006	19152
15	102	K 710	08152	111605



Tuesday - When Knife Injury Incidents Occur

It's easy to forget safety tips when you are trying to unpack large loads or under pressure to get a job completed. This is when simple mistakes can turn into serious workplace injuries. Many first aid and injury incidents have occurred for the following reasons:

- When you draw the knife towards you instead of away from your body
- Dull Blades: dull blades require more pressure which increase the chance of injury
- Attempting to cut into more than what the knife can handle
- Forgetting to inspect the knife before each use
- Leaving the blade extended while in storage
- Not wearing the correct personal protective equipment

Wednesday - Safe Steps to Take While Using a Utility Knife

Make sure your workstation is always equipped with the proper cutting tool, problems tend to arise when workers don't have the proper tool at their disposal. As a result, the worker will most likely use whatever is nearby or handy, such as pocket knife or other tools with sharp edges.

Here are a few safety steps to take while using a utility knife:

- Always stay focused at task at hand.
- Always wear safety glasses to protect your eyes in case of a blade breaking.
- Always wear cut resistant gloves and sleeves to protect your arms and hands.
- Always keep your extremities away from the cutting path.
- Always use a sharp blade, they are much safer than a dull blade.
- Never apply too much pressure on the blade.
- Never use a utility knife to pry loose objects.
- Never point a knife at another employee.

Thursday – Knife Safety at Home

Knife Safety also extends into the home setting because cooking and prepping is essential to the operation of every kitchen. So it is equally important to know how to hold a knife and use it correctly.

- Always use a sharp knife
- Always use the right knife for the task
- Always keep your knives clean
 - Is your knife dish washer safe?
 - Inspect your knives for bacterial build up
- Always know the proper cutting technique
 - Always use a cutting board



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 49 – December 2-8, 2019

Knife Safety

- Be aware of the placement of your hands
- Keep your free hand away from the blade
- Bring your blade down and through your ingredient in one smooth motion.
- Store your knives correctly
- Pay attention to what you are cutting

Friday – Activity

Safe Cutting Tools Have:

- A blade that auto retracts after completing the cut regardless of hand position relative to activation device or a guard that deploys immediately after completion of cut regardless of hand position relative to activation device or a blade that is fully recessed and situated in a way that eliminates skin/blade contact.
- A handle that is ergonomically appropriate for the task in which it is intended/approved.

Safe Cutting Tools **do not have**:

- A blade that locks open
- A spring loaded blade that does not retract automatically after a cut is completed.

Take a moment and review the knife safety chart from Monday's Safety Talk. If you have any level 4 or 5 knives in your work area please remove them from your tool box or collection. Hand them in to your supervisor and write up a safety opportunity.

Thanks to Martor work knives for the handy knife level chart:

<https://www.martor.com/en.html>